

Prabuddha Bharata

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GLIMPSES

'I, too, plough and sow,' said Buddha, standing by the farmer at work upon the soil, 'and from my ploughing and sowing I reap immortal fruit. My field is religion; the weeds I pluck up are the passions of cleaving to existence; my plough is wisdom, my seed purity.'

Hardy's Manual, P. 215.

As his desire, so is his resolve; as his resolve, so his work; as his work, so his reward.....But he who does not desire, who has no desires, who is beyond desire, whose desires have been attained, whose object of desire is Atman, his sense organs do not depart (for spirit-life or re-incarnation, at death). Being the very Brahman he attains to Brahman.

—Brihadaranyaka Upan.

Just as these rivers flowing towards the sea, their goal, having reached the sea disappear, their name and form are destroyed, and all is called sea; so of him, that sees the *Purusha* around the sixteen *Kalas* whose goal is the *Purusha* having reached *Purusha* disappear; their name and form are destroyed and all is called *Purusha* alone. He becomes devoid of parts and immortal.

—Prasnopanishad.

GET out of the joy and you will get out of the sorrow. Get out of wanting "things" and you will get out of the limitation that things impose. Let us get rid of the idea that death is possible, or that mortal life is real, and take hold of the truth that *being is eternal*. Get rid of the idea that *you* are virtuous and you will also get rid of the idea that someone else is vicious. Get rid of the idea that *you* are going to heaven and you will get rid of the idea that someone else is going to hell. Get into the consciousness of yourself which chooses to be what you are—the great, eternal One of existence. Get over the limited God idea—the limited Saviour. Measure not your light by any limit, which is darkness. There are no mistakes for you. There is no limitation for you—no loss, no lack, in the eternal glory of your God-soul.

—Lydia A. Bell.

ONE ship drives east, and another drives west
With the selfsame winds that blow.

'Tis the set of the sails,
And not the gales,
Which tell us the way they go.

Like the winds of the sea are the ways of fate;
As we voyage along through life,

'Tis the set of a soul
That decides its goal,
And not the calm or the strife.

— Ella Wheeler Wilcox.

SRI RAMAKRISHNA'S TEACHINGS

ADVICE TO THE WORLDLY-MINDED -VI

A SAGE and a god should never be visited emptyhanded. However trifling the present, it may be even a petty myrobolan, take something with you to place before these great ones of the world.

A SHY horse does not go straight so long as its eyes are not covered by a hood. Similarly the mind of a worldly man should be prevented from looking about by an eye-piece of Viveka (discrimination) and Vairagya (dispassion) for then it will not stumble or go astray in evil paths.

THE worldly men do everything aright but make one sad mistake.

Q. What is that mistake, Sir?

A. If they undergo those sacrifices and hardships and make use of their learning, intellect and perseverance for the sake of God instead of riches and honour, what good could they gain!

To someone he said, "Well, now you have come to seek God when you have spent the greater part of your life in the world. Had you entered the world after obtaining God what peace and joy you would have found!

Q. WHY do not the worldly men give up everything and follow God?

A. Can a pantomime coming on the stage throw off his masks at once? Let the worldly men play their parts and in time they would throw off their false appearances.

MEN often quote the example of the King Janaka, as that of a man who lived in the

world and yet attained perfection. But throughout the whole history of mankind there is only this solitary example. His case was not the rule, but the exception. The general rule is that no one can attain spiritual perfection unless he renounces lust and greed. Do not think yourself to be a Janaka. Many centuries have rolled away and the world has not produced another Janaka.

THE maid-servant says with reference to her master's house, 'This is our house.' All the while she knows that the house is not her own, and that her own house is far away in a distant village of Burdwan or Nuddea. Her thoughts are all sent forth to her village home. Again referring to her master's child in her arms she would say, 'My *Hari* (that being the name of the child) has grown very naughty,' or, 'My *Hari* likes to eat this or that' and so on. But all the while she knows for certain that *Hari* is not her own. I tell those that come to me to lead a life unattached like this maid-servant. I tell them to live unattached to this world—to be in the world, but not of the world—and at the same time to have their mind directed to God—the heavenly home from whence all come. I tell them to pray for *Bhakti*.

WHAT is man to do if he does not stay in the world? Once a clerk was put into jail. After the expiration of his term of confinement he came out. Well, what should he do? Should he dance away his time in joy at his release, or take up his former occupation? Go on with your work leaving the issues with the Lord.

THE PROBLEM OF PERSONAL IDENTITY

MR. J. J. COTTON, I. C. S., contributes a very interesting article on the above subject in the September *Indian Review*. Not that he arrives in it at any solution of the problem, but he states the arguments of both 'Scepticism' and 'Philosophy' on the subject in a very lucid manner. His own conclusion with which he ends the paper is as follows: "The great argument for a Permanent Self must always be derived from consciousness; but the argument must apparently remain at the same time wrapped in that veil of the objection and criticism which seems to be the constant fate of the deeper problems of speculative philosophy."

It may probably not prove uninteresting to our readers to have a *resume* of the paper with a few words of comment from the Vedantic viewpoint. After a few explanatory sentences Mr. Cotton makes the following propositions about consciousness: "(1) That it must be continually passing from one state into another (consequently there must be a continuous differentiation of states); (2) That consciousness is the feeling of pleasure, pain, emotion, sight &c., and is not the subsequent recognition of these modes of mind; (3) That it is immediate and not mediate knowledge. If the title 'knowledge,'" he goes on very pertinently to observe, "be denied by the academic sceptic to any mere presentation of sense &c., it is still possible for us to assert that even if consciousness does not give knowledge, it gives presentations, which, even according to the sceptic's own showing, are the basis of thought and, consequently, the most certain 'facts' which man can command. Accordingly, the results of consciousness are not to be doubted or

denied. It has even been urged that if we doubt consciousness, such doubt would be in itself an act of consciousness and so annihilate itself."

Scepticism, as found in Hume enlarges on this fact of the constantly changing and various states of consciousness. He says, "The mind is a kind of theatre, where several perceptions successively make their appearance; pass, repass, glide away and mingle in an infinite variety of postures and situations." The series, that is of 'impressions' is not connected; there is no unity outside that of the 'impressions' themselves, no governing or ordering faculty in the mind. This denial of the unity of the mind (that is, in other words of 'a Permanent Ego') saps the foundations of all metaphysics which depend on the conception of spirit, soul, or nous.

Philosophy has given two answers to this problem. That consciousness not only gives us presentments of our own feelings &c., but adds to each and every one of those several presentments, a consciousness of self. The act of feeling is indissolubly bound up with the idea "this is I that feel." But an Intuitionist philosopher will go further and say that we know self as having existence; our immediate knowledge is not of an impression or a quality, but of a reality. Again, we know self as not dependent for its existence on our perception of it, *i. e.*, when we come to know self we know it as existing already. This of course, if true gives us complete evidence of a permanent ego.

But Hume anticipated these arguments. Not doubting the claims of consciousness, he nevertheless has not scrupled to analyse the

contents of self-consciousness. "For my part," says Hume, "when I enter most intimately into what I call *myself* I always stumble upon some particular perception or other, of heat or cold, light or shade, love or hatred, pain or pleasure. I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception." And he adduces the fact that when perception is removed at any time, as by sleep, there is no perception of self; and he argues, that if after death he can have no perception of love, hatred, fear and the like, he will be utterly annihilated:— "Nor do I see what is further requisite to make me a perfect non-entity." To this remorseless logic of Hume may be added another argument, as against the advocate of the Permanence of Ego from the side of Intuition. Allowed, that each perception of love &c., is a revelation of self: is this a revelation of a permanent self? Is not the belief that self exists even while we are fainting, asleep, insensible &c., the result of an induction rather than of consciousness?

But the case of the Permanent Ego is not left in this bad plight by Mr. Cotton. Before attempting to state what Vedanta has to say in reply to the sceptics we shall present to the reader, (more or less in our own words) a few arguments in favour of a Permanent Ego from his paper.

Supposing me to have already the idea of Self or Ego, I experience a second, third, fourth &c., perception and think of these perceptions in relation to those which I have experienced before, recognising that it is the same I who experienced the previous perceptions that now experience these.

Mill has confessed that we are here face to face with a "final inexplicability,"

The facts of memory and expectation make this 'inexplicability' more inexplicable, from the sceptic point of view, and point incontrovertibly towards a Permanent Ego. Each of these

phenomena involves a belief in more than its own present existence: memory recalling a sensation similar to itself in the past, expectation doing the same with the future. We cannot thus reject the theory of the believers in Personality as presented by consciousness and accept that of Hume: for if we are to speak of mind as a series of feelings, we are obliged to complete the statement by calling it a series of feelings which is aware of itself as past and future.

Which abundantly proves the existence of a Permanent Ego.

We may now turn to Vedanta and see what it has to say to this problem. Its reply to Hume's argument,—that because "I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never can observe anything but the perception," these changeful and changing perceptions are all that is real about us: there is no unity or Permanent Ego—is well known. Ages ago the reply came from the lips of an ancient sage while discoursing on immortality to his wife: "How, O beloved, should the knower, know the knower"?

The difference between the Ego and the Non-ego, in other words, the Perceiver and the Perceived, the Subject and the Object is patent to all. The perceiving Subject is conscious of the perceived Object as well as of itself: while the perceived Object does neither. "They are," in the words of Sankara, "opposed to each other in their very *essence* as darkness and light, and therefore one cannot take the place of the other. It follows all the more that their attributes cannot be interchanged." To ignore their difference and make the one serve for the other, is in the language of a great Western scholar "the substitution of a nominative for an accusative or of an active for a passive verb. We mean by object what is perceived; not, indeed by itself, but by its qualities, but it is made to mean the very opposite, namely what perceives, and is thus

supposed to lay hold of and strangle itself. What causes the irritations of our senses is confounded with what receives these irritations; what is perceived with what perceives, what is conceived with what conceives, what is named with the namer. It is admitted on all sides that there never could be such a thing as an object except when it has been perceived by a subject. And yet we are asked to believe that the perceiving subject, is really the result of a long continued development of the object. This is a logical somersault which it seems almost impossible to perform, and yet it has been performed again and again in the history of philosophy."

It will thus be seen that "I never catch *myself* at any time without a perception, and never observe anything but the perception" for the very sufficient reason that *myself* being the Subject can never be caught as a perception, for in that case it would be an Object, which it could never be! The Subject is forever the Subject.

We say, the Subject can never be *perceived as an Object*, advisedly. For though it cannot be perceived as such, it is not absolutely beyond possibility to realise the Subject. It may realise itself by becoming itself more fully and perfectly than it is now. This is what constitutes the aim of the Indian philosophies, the goal of the Indian social system and conduct, the final purpose of all virtue and self-denial, of asceticism and renunciation.

To state with any clearness the *modus operandi*, how the Subject can know itself by itself, (not by the mind), *i. e.*, *fully realize itself*, by becoming the whole of itself, it is necessary to briefly outline the Vedantic theory of Atman. The reality back of this phenomenal Universe of Subject and Object, the *thing-in-itself* is Atman—the One Being, the One Self. It is divided, as it were, into Subject and Object; as in a dream a man divides his own mind into two opposing armies fighting

with one another. This division is unreal, the product of imperfect realisation. It vanishes like a dream, leaving no wreck behind, at the dawn of full realization. The Atman is bare intelligence. It is not what Mr. Cotton says in his first proposition, a series of continually changing states. It is not the feeling of pain, pleasure &c., but it is feeling *per se*. It is the constant, unchanging and unchangeable light which transforms neurosis into æsthesis, which is the essence of all perception and conception, and makes them possible. It is objectless or absolute consciousness.

It is apparent from the above that the Subject cannot *fully* realize itself so long as it is a Subject, *i. e.*, so long as it continues to be the complement of an Object. It is only half and imperfect, a part of the illusory show. Evidently to be the whole of itself it will have to completely surrender its half-hearted existence—*i. e.*, completely forget itself and its Object. The Object will have to be completely absorbed into the Subject or *vice versa*: the duality replaced by Unity. To accomplish this the Subject will have to shake itself free of all perceptions: eliminate all images from its mind. Hume says this cannot be done. But Indian experience extending over centuries asseverates that it can be. Every one can try it for oneself. There is no secret about it. Like everything else the fulfilment of certain conditions enables one to realize this immortal Truth for oneself. When the senses and desires have been controlled, when inner strength and favourable environment keep the mind at peace and free to follow undisturbed its object of thought, it is easy to meditate upon a certain object of interest for a time and absorb the whole mind in its thought. This could be done with increasing advantage and success by practice helped on by immediate elimination of the other thoughts which are sure to turn up by the score in the beginning and applying the mind again and again with renewed vigour and

earnestness on the *Ishtam* (subject selected for meditation). In a short time it will be seen the mind can fully occupy itself with the thought of the *Ishtam* for a while. A great deal will have been accomplished when this is done. In the place of infinite differentiations there will have then been only three, the Subject, the thinking, and the thought. But we can see these three even had all the time been trying to be *one*. The Subject and the thinking had been trying to absorb themselves completely in the thought. It was the thought that had been gaining and the other two losing themselves in it. For a very little reflexion will show that when we think of anything with any degree of attention we not only forget everything else, but we are not conscious of ourselves as well as our thinking power at the time. The appearance of self-consciousness during a thought breaks it. The more we can concentrate our mind upon a thought the more does that thought grow and the less our self-consciousness and thinking faculty make their existence felt, till at last there comes a certain point when all three are gone and the Atman alone remains, is revealed to itself, realizes itself fully and wholly. For, as Subject and Object are interdependent, the

complete absorption of the one means the annihilation of the other as such. The thinking faculty also disappears with its source. And necessarily the One that was back of all, the essence of all, the immortal, infinite, blissful, which for want of a better name the Rishis called Brahman, realizes itself once more, as the event can only be imperfectly described in our relative language.

The working out of the problem of personal identity according to Vedanta is briefly thus: When the *Antahkarana* (inner sense-organ: subtle physical principle) is evolved, one of the manifestations of Atman in it is the Ego, which is permanent till *Moksha*. The Ego having its roots in the *Antahkarana* and interpenetrating the *Karana* (causal) and *Sukshma* (astral) bodies which form as it were, the matrices of the physical body, is not of course exhausted by it. This accounts for a host of psychical phenomena, such as the existence of more than one personality in a so-called single individual, clairvoyance, true dreams &c. From the viewpoint of Atman both Ego and Non-ego belong to the realm of unreality. They are identical in Atman and Atman is the only reality and identity.

MISSIONARIES IN CONFERENCE

(Continued from page 150)

TO perpetrate the ideas advanced in the World's Parliament of Religions, held in Chicago, some of the advanced thinkers of the time have held general sessions in other large cities. The sixth session was opened at Boston on the 24th April last with a sermon by the Rev. Dr. Heber Newton of the Episcopal Church, in which he gave utterance to the spirit of the movement. It

is that while "religions are many, religion is one," "essential Christianity is essential Judaism, essential Hindooism."

The resolutions adopted were:—

"The Congress of Religion, assembled at Boston in its sixth general session, would set forth the spirit that it seeks to promote and the principles for which it stands. It recognizes the underlying unity that must characterize all sincere and earnest workers of God and welcomes the free expression of positive

convictions, believing that a sympathetic understanding between men of differing views will lead to finer catholicity of mind and more efficient service of men. Hence it would unite in fraternal conference those of whatever name who believe in the application of religious principles and spiritual forces in the present problems of life.

"Believing that the era of protest is passing and that men of catholic temper are fast coming together, it simply seeks to provide a medium of fellowship and cooperation where the pressing needs of the time may be considered in the light of man's spiritual resources. It lays emphasis upon the value of this growing spirit of fraternity, it affirms the religious value and the significance of the various spheres of human work and service, and it seeks to generate an atmosphere in which the responsibilities of spiritual freedom shall be heartily accepted equally with its rights and privileges."

Rev. R. Heber Newton who has we hear, lately become an honorary member of the Vedanta Society founded by Swami Vivekananda in New York, delivered himself as follows in a learned discourse on "The Witness of Sacred Symbolism to the Oneness of Spiritual Religion":—

* * * *

We are here not only to plead for a toleration of all religions and worships, Christian, Jewish and ethnic of every variety; we are here to plead for a sympathy between all religions—for the reciprocal recognition of vital truths in each other's religion.

"We seek to cultivate the mutual respect and confidence among men of discordant intellectual convictions, in which we all may be inclined to consider not only the common Christianity below our denominational differences, but the common religion below our religions, establishing thus the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace.

"The vice of dogmatic religion is the exaggeration of the dogmas of the different religions, the isolation of each doctrinal score. No spiritual symphony is possible when each religion insists on naming the one only score of the divine master, and on rendering it as an aria.

"Against such spiritual selfishness, the 'monsters' now assembled protest—not in the interest of vagueness, the indetermination of indifference—but of the faith which lies below all beliefs, the doctrine which is the heart of every dogma, the spiritual trust out of which all intellectual conviction springs."

"Our age," he continued, "makes certain the unity of the human race. The unity of the human race carries with it the unity of the spiritual nature of man. The unity of the spiritual nature of man holds in it the unity of religion—that is the expression of the spiritual life of man; as the one human soul fronts the mystery of the one Cosmos. The long puzzle as to the secret of the curious resemblance, between religions is settled once for all. The differences of religion are the differences between the pine of the Adirondacks and the pine of Long Island—differences of soil and climate. Or they are the differences between the year-old pine and the pine of a hundred years—differences in the stage of development.

"Why should we waste our moral energies and deaden our spiritual lives by dwelling on differences which separate us, by quarrelling over intellectual disagreements, by contending for things which isolate us? Why should we covet petty provincialisms of piety rather than cosmopolitanism of character? Brothers, one and all, of whatever name, in that we dare to call ourselves liberals—the free men of the spirit—who have outgrown the petty provincialisms of piety and entered upon the cosmopolitanism which is native to the heart of man, the catholicity of the soul—be it ours to leave behind all the polemics of religious partisanship and to aspire after the one spiritual religion of humanity. Be it ours so to free our different religions from their swathing bands that they may know the power of individual redemption and of social salvation, held in their common symbol."

When Dr. Heber Newton, says the Boston Herald, declared in his address before the "Liberal Congress of Religions" that we should not waste our moral energies and deaden our spiritual lives by dwelling on the differences which separate us, by quarrelling over our intellectual disagreements, or by contending for the things which isolate us, he threw out an inspiring utterance that in itself makes the whole Congress worth while if not another word were said. It is annoying to note the petty theological disputes of the day. At its best, there is nothing in such a dispute * * but what would yield to a harmonious treatment. But never again will it be possible to carry on such quarrels with their old-time vigor. The snap and sting are certainly out of them.

The Rev. Samuel M. Crothers of Cambridge spoke on "Religious History in the Making"

They met, he was led to believe, with a sense of unity, that however far apart they might have strayed dogmatically, they were still strong in the conviction that after all the points of difference were not so great as those of similarity. This in itself, he thought, was one of the best illustrations of religious history in the making—the endeavor to find a common meeting ground in order to cope with the religious demands of the hour.

Continuing, he said in part: "We come together not out of idle curiosity or tolerant good humor, but because we are firm in the belief that there are certain things to be done or to be done better than is at present the case. We are beginning to feel that the one thing demanded of us is the better adaptation of religion to the life of the day. The mistake, however, generally made is that in trying to solve this problem we forget our relation to the past, we fail to realize that in historical religion there are certain roots that have remained the same throughout the ages, and that the vast multitude of those who have gone before have tried humbly to do in their generation just what we are trying to do in ours.

"Years ago I made up my mind as to where I belonged. I saw that there was no danger of getting too much religion, or likelihood that from any one belief all that was desirable or satisfying could be obtained. Nothing less comprehensive than the holy church universal would serve the purpose. The history of religion ought to be reconceived and rewritten. Instead of being fragmentary, it was all made from one warp and woof, progressive through the centuries. If this be true we cannot, with justice, disregard what has gone before. We are part of it, and we shall be and can be a resultant only of what have been.

"The Goths and Vandals were not the real destroyers of ancient Rome. It was the Romans themselves. They failed to recognize new conditions; they had not learned the lesson that each generation needs reconstruction. In progress there is always a certain amount of matter to be torn down; unless the new is built up, stagnation or decay follows. Man is never satisfied. To this lack of content is due the evolution of the race.

"The great ages of religion," he continued, "was the times when men not only felt religion but lived it."

Dr. Lewis G. Jones as chairman of the local committee, in his address of welcome gives expression to the 'new thought' (we need

not observe it is a very old Vedic thought) which is destined to spiritualize Christianity, by a beautiful metaphor.

"The minds of men," he said, "are like diamonds, each with a thousand facets, no two cut after exactly the same pattern, but each reflecting the white light of God's eternal truth at an angle somewhat different from that of any other. No ray of light shall be lost which is transmitted in loving sincerity and submitted to the fine spectrum analysis of spiritual utility. It is only by focussing a myriad rays from a thousand different points, and recognizing the beauty and necessity of each in the universal plan, that the highest conception of divine truth can be attained, and the needed lessons of charity and intellectual modesty can be duly learned and assimilated. * * * We are beginning to see, that the chief object of life is not so much the intellectual as the practical solution of its problems. Religion is life itself, not mere speculations about the nature or purpose of life."

Professor Charles C. Everett, D. D., in his paper on "The Progress of Thought in the Last Generation" dwells on the same theme.

"Naturalism is, as the name implies, the foe of supernaturalism. The Christian Church had accepted a form of supernaturalism so extravagant, so fantastical in certain of its aspects, and so terrible in others, that the attacks of the developing naturalistic spirit found a field for healthful reform. It is when, exulting in its success, this naturalism would stand absolutely alone, that the ill effects begin to show themselves. What the world needs, here as everywhere, is a balance of forces. The true relation is established when naturalism and supernaturalism work harmoniously together—each furnishing at once a check and an inspiration to the other.

"The most important of the changes which have taken place in the Church are connected with the idea of authority in religious belief, in regard to the thought of the relation of God to the world, and the relation of religion to life. In no respect has the change in religious thought been more marked than in regard to the authority of the Bible. The change of feeling in multitudes of religious men is simply astounding. We have come to interpret in our own way the facts which are given in the New Testament, as the New Testament writers explained it their way. We do not even feel bound to accept as genuine all the sayings that are put into the mouth of Jesus.

"This change is, I am tempted to say, the greatest that has taken place in the whole history of the Church. It came suddenly, yet so quietly that we hardly realize that anything remarkable has taken place. Those who have not yet felt in their own experience the touch of the new era recognize this aspect of modern religious life, but they do not re-

alize its importance. They think that it is something that can be ended by a few heresy trials. It is as if a snowbank in the spring should fancy that it could remain in undisturbed peace as soon as it could get rid of the few drops of water that are oozing out of it."

(To be continued)

A SHANTI ASHRAMA IN CALIFORNIA.

THE following interesting account of the development of the Vedanta movement in America is taken from a Californian paper:—

"They are Theosophists."

"They are Altrurians."

"They are Shakers."

"They are Bellamy students, who are going to build a new Utopia."

"They are celibates, vegetarians, faith-cure cranks."

"They are—"

These are some of the things that are said by the mystified people of the San Antone valley concerning a small body of men and women who are seeking righteousness by the route of Hindoo philosophy.

Strange rumors of the coming of a peculiar people to their peaceful lowlands began to be rife among the denizens of San Antone valley more than a month ago. From San Jose, where the mysterious party left the beaten track of civilization, to the heights of Mount Hamilton, down its steep dips and curves on the other side; through the smiling Ysabel valley; across the dry winding bed of the Coyote river; about the great "beef fields" of the stock ranches, to the

San Antone valley itself, where they have made their home, the fame of this strange people is blown abroad and wild and weird are the accounts of them.

"You do not know them?" I was invariably asked, as in my little pilgrimage to the "Shanti Ashrama," which means Peaceful Retreat, I sought the countryside point of view of the work and ideals of the philosophic invaders of the quiet valley.

"I have come all the way from San Francisco to find out about them," was my reasonably disingenuous answer, for your countryfolk are gentle people and would not criticise your friends even upon invitation, and I must admit more knowledge of the subject than my queries gave me credit for. But points of view are so fascinating, and the large latitude for the imagination in the mysterious doings of this new cult so tempting that I fell by the wayside into the sin of the listener. As we neared the valley in the wilderness the reports grew more intimate and picturesque. As we went down the farther slopes of Mount Hamilton, with ineffably beautiful vistas of brown and golden hills, opening at either side, the driver of the neat little rig

which carried me to my destination told me what "they said."

Darker and more wonderful grew the tales as the twilight deepened into night, and the distant glimmer of a camp fire told of the whereabouts of the mysterious company. Tales of mesmeric marvels, of how the dusky Hindoo monk, the Swami Turyananda, leader of the little band of truthseekers, had hypnotized his American disciples; how they sat in mystic circles around the camp fire at night, chanting mysterious harmonies; how strange things might be seen rising from the flames and gliding in and about the hoary old oaks surrounding the magic fire, were one willing to adventure within range of the influence—all this he told me.

"Not that I believe the stories," the sturdy mountaineer said, with a hunter's disregard for aught but the sportsman's superstitions, but we were both curiously silent as we drove into the "Shanti Ashrama," and came upon the very scene described by the imaginative villagers.

In a stillness almost absolute, broken only by the light hiss of the living flame leaping upward to the velvety blue-black sky and the faint murmur of far pines, the worshipers of the divine, as known to the Hindoos, sat in charmed circle. At one side, immobile as a bronze Buddha, and in the immemorial position assumed by that ancient teacher of men, sat the Swami Turyananda, and about him his disciples, all with closed eyes, and a look of rapt contemplation upon their quiet faces. Now and again the deep musical chant of a Sanscrit hymn, intoned in a rich, low voice, broke the

silence; then again only the song of the pines was heard, and the worshipers sat in as utter an unconsciousness of the stranger in their midst and the mundane world as if they had been in the innermost recesses of the Himalayan mountains whence comes their teacher.

At last one of the silent figures rose, bade me welcome warmly and sped the kindly driver and the huntsman who had guided us the last few miles; then took me to the camp kitchen and prepared a needed meal, entertaining me until the sacred ceremonial around the fire was at an end. Then we joined the worshipers.

Once within the cheerful circle of the blaze, and in range of its grateful warmth, the camp seemed much as other camps but for the picturesque and unusual figure of the leader, Swami Turyananda, garbed in a robe of elusive gray, dark as is the wont of the children of the sun, with bright, black eyes, a brow covered with fine lines of thought, a mild and gracious mien, yet withal an indefinable air of an absolute aristocracy. He was a singular figure at a good American camp fire. The others, the chelas or disciples, curiously enough twelve in number, are simply good United States citizens, with the usual brown face and country rig of the average camper, short skirts and sunbonnets included, for they are mostly women. But it is a strange camp nevertheless.

Imagine in a country swarming with deer, jack rabbits, dove, quail and all kinds of game a camp without a gun! Imagine Sanscrit chants 'round the camp fire at night instead of the classic "Clementine" and the "Spanish Cavalier!" Imagine discussions on the cos-

mic evolution and its purpose in place of hunters' tales of derring-do in the woods! Imagine, in short, every ideal of the ordinary camp displaced and a resolute hunt after the inner "potential divinity" of man substituted and you have the "Shanti Ashrama."

"I have come to write about you, Swami," I confessed at length when the meditative atmosphere had been somewhat dispelled and I found courage to bring the outer world into the philosophers' retreat.

"Many miles we have come to get away from civilization, and lo! it is at our heels again," smiled the Swami, and seeing my camera—which suddenly seemed to take on a profane air—he chanted, "O Shiva, Shiva, Shiva!" which, I find, is the utmost expression of amused annoyance permitted to rise to the gentle lips of these Hindoo thinkers.

"But you will permit? And will you not tell me in so many words what you wish to do here, the ideal and purpose for which the Shanti Ashrama has been founded?"

"Surely," he said, "but we shall find it all at the beginning of the 'Raja Yoga,' which Swami Vivekananda wrote and translated. Let us read; it is here:

"Each soul is potentially divine. The goal is to manifest this divinity within by controlling nature, external and internal.

"Do this either by work, or worship, or psychic control, or philosophy, by one or more or all of these—and be free.

"This is the whole of religion. Doctrines, or dogmas, or rituals, or books, or temples, or forms, are all but secondary details."

"You use certain physical means to your end, as, for instance, the control of the breath, refraining from certain foods, and so on. What is the philosophy of that?" I asked.

"Simply that it is always easier to control that which is gross than that which is fine. First, control the body by means of controlling the breath, the principal gross motion of the body, and finer perceptions will inevitably follow. The power of concentration, by which all knowledge is attained, is most readily reached in this manner, the reflective power of the mind most readily aroused. Concentration on external things is less difficult. It is the study of the mind, by the mind itself, through which the soul is known that we are attempting here, and through perfectly simple and practical methods, which you will find well explained in the Raja Yoga."

"Are you all going to be Swamis—Yogis?" I asked of the interested circle, who were regarding the wise, child-like face of their teacher with evident love and admiration.

"In some distant future," smiled one of them. "But the retreat is founded, and we hope it will be the center of attraction for this kind of thought all through America. It is the only Shanti Ashrama outside of India, and California, with its possibilities of outdoor life, is certainly the happiest situation possible for one."

And then they told me that the land had been the gift of one of them, Miss Boock—160 acres of it, a veritable wilderness, forty miles from any railroad and comfortably distant from the dis-

tractions of civilization.

"Shiva, Shiva, Shiva!" said the Swami again, once more regarding the incongruous camera. "You told me, Chetana," he said, smiling at one of the members, "that we must have the retreat a little Americanized, and it is here. Shiva, Shiva, Shiva!"

And Chetana merely replied that nothing these days was sacred from the photographic eye and then explained to me the curious situation in the valley, once thickly settled. Swiss-Italians and Germans and others came to farm the

fertile plains, and for a time the place was musical with the hum of many voices. But water was difficult to obtain and transportation prohibitive and the little colony left the beautiful valley in despair. Now there are houses without inhabitants, a school-house without scholars, wells without water, and barns without grain. Great stock ranches have grown up in their stead, one near by 44,500 acres in extent, and to these things are due the desirable solitude which surrounds the Ashrama.

(To be concluded)

LEAVES FROM THE GOSPEL OF SRI RAMAKRISHNA

(According to M., a son of the Lord and servant)

[Sri Ramakrishna with Vivekananda and other disciples, his illness at Shampukur, Calcutta, and treatment by Dr. Sircar and other doctors.]

Tuesday 27th October 1885.

IT is about half-past five in the afternoon. The great national festival *Durgapuja* was celebrated only a few days back. It was so difficult for the disciples to join the festivities with their whole heart. How could they rejoice when the Master was suffering from a serious malady? It was cancer of the throat, and Dr. Sircar, the well-known Homœopathic practitioner, had hinted that the disease was past all human remedies. The temple of Kali at Dakhineswar, where he ordinarily resided, was not within easy reach of Calcutta Doctors. So the Master has been staying, for the last three months at Shampukur and is now under the treatment of Dr. Sircar. The hint thrown out by the Doctor has proved a heavy blow to the

poor disciples. It was so hard to believe that their Master was soon to leave them like orphans thrown adrift upon the wide wide world.

It was so distressing to think that the days of rejoicing following one another without any interruption which they passed with him were numbered. They shed tears in solitude. Hoping against hope they yet prayed for his recovery. They served their Master body, mind and soul, nursed him and attended to his smallest wants, day and night. To the younger disciples headed by Narendra (Vivekananda) this great and unique service of the Master, led the way to the great renunciation of the world of which they are the most glorious example in the present day. For was not the Master their living Ideal, a Being before their very eyes—who had given up the world and its so-called pleasures for the sake of God?

Strange that in spite of the serious illness,

people poured in with a view to see, if only to catch a glimpse of, the God-man of whom they had heard so much. They felt that verily it was peace and joy to come into the presence of Sri Ramakrishna. 'Oh, how kind, how loving', was the universal observation. Anxious for the welfare of the meanest among them, he would talk to them of God, talk of his Heavenly Mother in the midst of intense physical suffering. At last the Doctors, especially Dr. Sircar, left a strict injunction with the disciples, not to allow people to see him and engage him in conversation. Dr. S., who would stay with the Master for hours together (sometimes six or seven hours) would say: 'Take care, you do not talk to anybody; the only person you may talk to for any length of time is myself in whose favour you may make this exception'. The fact was that the Doctor had been charmed with the company of the Master and with the words 'sweet as honey' that fell from his lips.

Besides Vivekananda and the Doctor there were present on this particular occasion Girish Ghosh, the great Bengali dramatist and poet, Doctor Docouri, Narendra Jr., (now an attorney of the High Court), Rakhai (Brahmananda), M., and many others.

The Doctor felt the pulse and prescribed the necessary medicines. There was then, for a while, a talk with reference to the course of the disease after which the Master took the first dose as directed. Dr. S., rising to depart said to Sri Ramakrishna who was talking to Sham Basu,

'Now that you have Sham Babu to talk to, will you allow me to bid you goodbye?' Sri Ramakrishna:—Would you like to hear songs?

Doctor:— I should like very much. But your feelings would be terribly worked up and you will shoot up into all sorts of antics. One's feelings must be kept under control.

The Doctor took his seat once more, and

Vivekananda began to pour out his charming melodies to the accompaniment of the *Tanpura* and the *Mridang*.

He sang :

(God and His works)

1. Wonderful, Infinite, is the Universe made by Thee. It is the repository of all beauty.
2. Ten thousands of stars do shine—a necklace of gold studded with gems. Innumerable are the moons and the suns.
3. The earth is adorned with wealth and corn; full indeed is your store-house.
4. O Great Lord, innumerable are the heavenly bodies which sing, 'well done', 'well done.' They sing without ceasing.

He sang again :

(Kali or the Mother of the Universe.)

1. In the midst of the dense darkness, O Mother! breaketh forth a flood of light, the wealth of Thy formless beauty. To this end is the *Yogi's* meditation in the mountain cave.
2. In the lap of darkness infinite, and borne on the sea of great *Nirvana*, the fragrance of peace everlasting floats onward without cessation.
3. O Mother! Who art Thou, seated alone within the temple of *Samadhi*, assuming the form of *Mahakali* (the Great Consort of the Lord of Eternity) and wearing the apparel of darkness?
4. Thy lotus feet keep us from fear; in them doth flash the lightning of Love for Your children. In Thy face made of spirit doth shine Thy wild, wild laugh.

Doctor (to M.):—It is dangerous to him—this singing. It will work upon his feelings with serious results.

Sri Ramakrishna (to M.):—What says the Doctor?

M:—~~See~~ the doctor is afraid lest this singing works upon your feelings and brings on *Bhava-Sam*.

*Gut-consciousness accompanied by loss of sense-consciousness.

Sri Ramakrishna (to the Doctor, and with folded hands.):—No, oh no, why should my feelings be worked up? I am very well.

But as soon as these words were uttered the Master went right down into deep *Sama-ahi*. His corporeal frame became motionless. The eyes moved not. He sat speechless like a veritable figure of wood or stone. All sense consciousness had ceased to be. The mind, the principle of personal identity, the heart, had all stepped out of their wonted course towards that One Object, the Mother of the Universe.

Again did Vivekananda pour out of his sweet, charming throat melody after melody. He sang :

(The Lord, my Husband).

1. What a charming beauty is here ! O what a charming face ! The Lord of my soul has come to my (humble) abode.

2. Lo ! the spring of my love is running over (with joy).

3. O Lord of my soul, Thou Who art made of love alone, are there any riches that I can offer to Thee ? O accept my heart, my life, my all, yes Lord ! my all, deign to accept.

And yet again :

(Nothing Good or Beautiful without the Lord.)

1. Gracious Lord, what comfort can be there in life, if the bee of the soul is not lost in the lotus of Thy feet for evermore.

2. What is the use in countless heaps of wealth if at the same time Thou, the most precious of all gems, art not kept with care !

3. The tender face of the child, I do not wish to look at, if on that face, beautiful like the moon as it is, I cannot see (the image of) Thy loving face.

4. What a thing is moonlight ! It would indeed appear as darkness absolute if when the outward moon appears in the heavens, the moon of Thy love does not rise also (in the firmament of the soul) at the same time.

5. Even the holy attachment of the chaste

wife would be full of impurities if the gold of her (human) love is not set with the (priceless) gem of Thy Divine Love.

6. Lord, scepticism about Thee, the offspring of infatuation is like the never ceasing bite of the poisonous snake.

7. Lord what more shall I say to thee ! Thou art the priceless jewel of my heart, the abode of joy everlasting !

Listening to the song, specially to the portion referring to the chaste wife and the child, the Doctor cried out 'Ah me !' 'Ah me !' Narendra sang again :

(*Prema* or the Love of God).

1. O how long shall I have to wait for the appearance of that *prema* (madness of love for God) when, having nothing else in the world to wish for, I shall chant that name of Hari (God) and there shall flow from my eyes a stream of love-tears !

2. When shall my life, my mind be made pure, O when shall I go on a pilgrimage to the *Brindaban* of Love, when shall I be set free from the bondage of the world, O when shall the darkness of my eyes be driven away by the collyrium of Knowledge Divine !

3. When shall the iron of my body be turned into gold at the touch of the (divine) Touchstone ! When shall I see the vision of a world made up of God alone !

4. O when shall my desire for doing good works be a thing of the past, when shall my sense of caste and family distinctions be gone, O when shall I be placed beyond fear, anxiety and the feeling of shame, O when shall I give up pride and (slavish obedience to) custom !

5. With the dust of the feet of *Bhaktas* (lovers of god) rubbed all over my body, with the scrip of renunciation placed over my shoulders, when shall I drink the water of *prema* (ecstatic love) with the palm of both my hands from the river called *prema Yamuna* or the River of Love !

In the midst of the songs Sri Ramakrishna

has come to himself again. The singing came to a close. Then followed that conversation so charming alike to the learned and the illiterate, to the old and the young, to men, and to women, to the great and to the common people. The whole company sat mute and looked in silence at the Master's face. Was there any trace now of that serious illness from which he was suffering? Joy was there on the face, radiant with divine glory. Turning to the Doctor, Sri Ramakrishna began the conversation :—Do give up shyness, Doctor. One should not be shy in taking the name of the Lord before others, or in dancing with joy while chanting that

sweet name. Don't care what people will say ! The following proverb is very edifying :

Shyness, contempt and fear,

These three remaining you can't come

here.

The shy man says : 'I am such a big man. If this finds its way into big people's ears what would they say ! O what a shame if they say, 'the poor Doctor, has been dancing. He must have lost his head !'

Doctor :—That is not my line at all. I don't care what people may say.

Sri Ramakrishna :—On the contrary, you do care for it very much. (laughter).

(*To be continued*)

NĀNĀ KATHĀ

It is with the deepest sorrow that we announce the passing away on Sunday the 28th October last of Mr. J. H. Sevier, the joint-founder of the Advaita Ashrama, and a tried friend of India and the Indians. A staunch follower of the highest Vedic philosophy, with the characteristic liberality and catholicity of mind towards every other form of faith of a genuine Advaitin, a man human and noble, and a heart loyal and true, while his absence from us in the body is loss irreparable to us, ours is not the wish to drag him back to the concerns of this shadow existence by selfish thoughts. May he, if Karma's debts should remain, find in a higher form of life,—as we doubt not he has—conditions and opportunities for a greater and fuller realization of the Eternal Truth, the Ever-permanent One Being towards Which his highest aspirations were here directed ; and may the harmony of "*Hari Aum Tat Sat*," which he loved to hear and meditate upon, and which vibrated around him in forceful,

peaceful waves during his freedom from the flesh, sent out with the wholesouled earnestness of devoted and loving hearts, accompany him in his pilgrimage to a higher sphere and act as a guiding force in shaping his further evolution to the Perfect ! *Hari Aum Tat Sat !*

By special desire expressed most emphatically all through life his remains were cremated, with Vedic rites, with new silk cloth, ghee sandal-wood, camphor, incense &c.

WE are glad to learn that the Ramakrishna Mission has been co-operating with the Sobhabazar Benevolent Society in the flood relief-work. Two members of the Mission, Swami Trigunatita, Editor, *Udbodhan*, who worked during the famine in Dinajpur, and Swami Sadananda, who worked during the plague in Calcutt a—are in the field. Swami Trigunatita has gone to Behala-Bishnupur to inspect and to help the needy there, on behalf of the Benevolent Society.—*Indian Mirror*.

We are very happy to acknowledge receipt of Rs.35, collected by the members of the Sadharan Dharma Sabha, Fyzabad, for the Kishengurh Orphanage. Our special thanks are due to Munshi Dwarka Prasad, Munshi Jai Dayal, and Mr. Surjan Lal Pandey, through whose labours the sum was raised.

We are very glad to publish the following information supplied us by the Joint-Secretary of the Sabha:

The Sabha was established in January last by the Swami Sivagniji, the founder of the Sivagir Shanti Ashrama, Guzerat, of which this is a branch, under the patronage of Rai Bahadur Ram Saran Das, M. A., and Babur Baldeo Prasad, Advocate. The object of this Sabha, like others founded by the Swami, is to serve as a meeting-place of all sects and creeds with a view to harmonize the action of each towards the all, by bringing about a better understanding of each other.

The Shanti Ashrama has for its objects: (a) to form an organization of able sadhus of all denominations and utilise their services for the amelioration of the country; (b) to publish and circulate practical religious literature in Hindi, Urdu and English; (c) and last but not the least to reform public fairs. To accomplish the last object the Ashrama holds the annual fair of the *Vyas Puja*; this year it was celebrated in July last at Lahore where people of different faith assembled and many spoke on various important religious subjects. This year at the instance of Swami Sivagniji, Goswami Tirathram, M. A., late professor of Mathematics and Vedanta of the Oriental college, Lahore, was elected the 'Vyas' of the Ashrama. To teach the practical lesson of renunciation the 'Vyasji' resigned his chair at the college and started for Badarikashram to practise sadhana, his wife and two children accompanying him.

THE latest news we have had of Swami

Vivekananda was from France where he was invited to attend the Congress of Religions held in connexion with the Exposition Universelle. We are informed however that it could hardly be termed a congress of religions; for it mainly consisted of a few scholars who read papers on the history of various religions from a scientific stand-point. The Swamiji spoke twice, well and to the point. At the termination of the proceedings a banquet was held on the Eiffel tower. Professor Geddes of the Edinburgh University and Père Hyacinth, the well-known French liberal clergyman are two of the new acquaintances added to Swami Vivekananda's already long list of friends.

SINCE his last acknowledgment the Swami Kalyanananda has received the following contributions for which his best thanks are due to the donors thereof:—

	RS.	AS.
Through the Math, Belur Howrah	600	0
„ Editor, Prabuddha Bharata	600	0
„ „ Bharati	...	5 0
„ Babu Jogendra Nath Bhattacharya Vill., Harpara,	...	
P. O. Srinagar Dt. Dacca	2	0
H. A. Srinivas Rao, Panagada	...	
Dt. Tumkur	...	10 0
Total	1217	0

The number of children in the Orphanage is 70, girls 20 and boys 50. A loom has been set up in the Orphanage where the boys are taught weaving by a teacher employed for the purpose. The Relief centre at the Railway Station has been withdrawn as it became unnecessary with the approach of the harvest time. It was broken up during the Durga Puja days after feeding and giving away cloths to about 200 people.